

Russians With Relatives Living Abroad Could Lose Access to State Secrets, Court Rules

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Russians working for state agencies or state-owned enterprises who have relatives living abroad may be denied access to sensitive government information and secrets, the Constitutional Court has ruled.

The court was acting on an appeal by an officer with the Border Agency of the Federal Security Service, or FSB, who argued that his constitutional rights were violated when a supervisor revoked his security clearance after learning that his teenage son had left to study in New Zealand.

The court upheld the decision, arguing that the restriction was necessary "for the purpose of protecting the foundations of constitutional order, ensuring the country's defense and security," according to the verdict published on the court's website.

The court also ruled that officials could be stripped of security clearance if they have close relatives who spend more than six of every 12 months outside of Russia, according to the

ruling reached in January.

Sergei Pushkin, the officer involved in the court case, had argued that his son's study overseas should not affect his own standing because the boy did not have a foreign residence permit or citizenship to another country, according to Constitutional Court materials [published online](#).

The ruling sided with a decision by a lower court that had denied Pushkin's appeal last year, and it could have implications for government officials who send their children abroad to study at Western schools.

The Constitutional Court saw no human rights violations in the decision, arguing that access to state secrets is a privilege that is not supposed to be granted to every citizen.

The Constitutional Court ruling is final and cannot be appealed, the verdict said.

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